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The present sword bears on the base of the guard the incised initials P. A. These evidently stand for Petrus Ancinus of Reggio, for this artist is known to have executed similar objects and to have signed them with his full name. He may well have made the sword at the order of his patron, either for the duke himself or for some member of the ducal household. We may be certain, at least, that only a personage of distinction would have carried

bears the signature: Petrus Ancinus Regiensis. F. MDCXXXXIII. The trigger guard with similar inscription was sold in Paris in 1895 in the Spitzer Collection.

Our sabre is interesting in the matter of its date, for it is probably one of the latest works of the master; for in the list noted above, Ancinus's period of activity ranged between 1641 and 1661, while the present sabre hardly antedates 1680.

The early provenance of our arm is un-



GUARD OF SABRE BEARING THE INITIALS OF PETRUS ANCINUS
ITALIAN, ABOUT 1685

so costly a sword. We know, furthermore, that Petrus Ancinus was already in the service of the dukes of Modena, for in 1661 he executed a sword bearing the blazon of the Este, and signed it in full. This is now preserved in the Artillery Museum in Paris (J. 230 of the catalogue of 1891), and is similar to the present sword but more elaborate in workmanship. In fact, our artist seems to have been so favorably known that he was patronized by some of the greatest princes of his day. Thus he prepared for one of the de' Medici the sword (1641) which is now in the museum in Florence (Catalogue of the Bargello, 1898, p. 28). There are also extant two examples of his work, quite similar in quality to the sabre-hilt, to which Mr. H. W. Harding recently called my attention. One of them is the sculptured lock of a harquebus, the other a trigger guard which probably belonged to the same lock. The lock, exhibited at the Burlington Fine Arts Club in 1900 and figured in its catalogue, is said to have come from the treasury of the Sultan at Constantinople: it

known. It was obtained from Mr. Harding, who in turn had it from the well-known collector, Baron de Cosson.

B. D.

THE INFORMATIVE SIDE OF MUSEUM WORK

A QUESTION mark might well be the emblem of one phase of activity in the Metropolitan Museum; for the Museum daily dispenses considerable information in answer to queries, both through conversation either at the Information Desk near the Fifth Avenue entrance or with curators and other members of the Museum staff, and through answers to letters from many people. Among the people thus helped are art museum officers and staff members, artists, artisans, connoisseurs, dealers, lecturers, writers, teachers, high school pupils, members of women's clubs and of committees responsible for placing commissions for works of art, individuals interested in art but not expert critics, would-be visitors

BULLETIN OF THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART

to the Museum, and persons possessing art treasures of greater or less value. The information desired is correspondingly varied and more or less closely connected with the subject of art. The value of such service, however, though not easily demonstrable, is undeniably great.

The character of the questions asked may be roughly tabulated somewhat as follows:

I. Concerning the Museum

1. The Building—floor space compared with other large museums, as the Louvre; floor plans (for an architect's use); date of erection and architects; location and way of reaching offices, galleries, lecture hall, class rooms, receiving department, elevators, telephone booths, checking room, etc.; where to find articles lost in the Museum.
2. The Administration—by-laws and constitution; history; cost of maintenance; endowment; annual income; membership fees and privileges; hours of opening and closing; receipts from admissions; reasons for pay days; number of visitors (free and paid) per year; number of employees; fire drills; privileges accorded copyists and photographers; conditions upon which objects of art are received as gifts, purchases, loans; method of securing tickets to members' receptions; use of wheelchair.
3. The Collections and Exhibits—location; value; source, date of acquisition, and probable length of exhibit; reasons for change of location or removal from exhibition; whether objects are originals, replicas, or copies; location of original, if replica or cast; special exhibitions; list of objects in special class, as Flemish paintings, Morgan Collection; publications on, as furniture, woodwork, ivories, engraved gems, ornaments, tapestries, Morgan Collection, ironwork, Oriental rugs, model of Parthenon.
 - a. Inscriptions—history of stone

with inscription; deciphering, translating, or copying inscriptions.

- b. Paintings—attributions; earlier owners or history; name of or painter of, with description given; description of, with title and artist given; size or meaning of individual painting; representation of given artist among; list of paintings of given school (as Flemish) or subject (St. Anthony), or technique (on copper).
 - c. Sculpture—facts concerning individual statue.
 4. Educational Work—lectures and lecturers; lending of lantern slides and photographs; services of the Museum Instructors; use of Class Rooms and Study Rooms; Library, hours and use.
- II. Concerning New York City¹—best and quickest way to reach streets, hotels, public buildings, stores; location of statues and zoo in Central Park; place and time of band concerts; obelisk, history and preservation; location, hours, and admission requirements of other museums; location, date, and hours of exhibitions of art and art galleries; art schools; theatres; bus and car lines; location of steamboat landings; taxicab rates; boarding places near Museum; mural decorations in; iron and bronze foundries, especially those that cast bronze tablets.
- III. Concerning Museum Problems—lighting of paintings galleries; wall coverings, color and materials; methods of hanging pictures; exhibition cases; labels; cataloguing of objects; blank forms in use; system of cleaning building; policy as to Museum Instructors; practice as to making casts of objects in collection; how to arrange for loan exhibits, to secure the loan of photographs or prints; how to re-

¹Though remotely connected with the immediate purpose of an art museum, many of these questions deal with the subjects on which a stranger in town naturally asks help when he leaves the Museum.

store and preserve old stones, textiles, paintings; how to color casts; best cement for mending old china; preparation for and means of securing museum position.

- IV. Concerning Objects of Art—attributions of; location of well-known collections or famous paintings; how to dispose of; valuation¹ of engravings, signed and unsigned, cameo portraits, paintings, books on art, and old lithograph color prints; to identify indistinct signatures on paintings; book describing lost masterpieces; lighting of Parthenon and other Greek temples.
- V. Concerning Publications on Art—special bibliography on Spanish fashions, ceramics, laces, embroideries, bronzes, ivories, ironwork, cloisonné; text books on art in general; to locate article referred to in New York daily.
- VI. Concerning Artists—lives; works both in and out of the Museum; location of works by; standing of; recommended for special commissions; how to secure desirable sculptor for special task; conditions of contract for such work; method of exhibition of works of, in New York City.
- VII. Addresses—of artists; craftsmen; art collectors; experts on paintings, jade, porcelain, cloisonné, seals, coins; leading art museums (those that publish Bulletins); lecturers on art in general or on some special branch, with their standing; best art schools, art classes, art clubs; a correspondence school of art; restorers of paintings, bronzes, and jewelry; cataloguers of works of art; people competent to move objects of art; manufacturers of tiles, display fixtures, brass labels, models, casts, dummy figures (with and without

heads) for costumes; syndicates that purchase pictures; dealers in Chinese wall-paper, plaster casts, photographs (of paintings, sculpture, famous buildings), engravings, and cream-colored linen such as lines Museum cases.

Among the questions even more difficult to answer, involving considerable time and labor if answered adequately, and in fact in some cases entirely outside the scope of an art museum to answer at all are the following:

The finest paintings in America; the world's ten or twelve greatest paintings; the best portrait painter and finest sculptor in New York City; the ten best painters besides Whistler and Inness; a list of old masterpieces in America; a list of important art treasures in Germany; material for papers on such subjects as Present-Day Artists in America, Painting in the Sixteenth Century, as expressed by Leonardo da Vinci, and Ancient Crafts in Modern New York; addresses of prominent people, those who might help artists or patronize charitable institutions, authorities on music, auctioneers; original ideas for decorating an automobile for a carnival; to translate an English word into Babylonian, Aramaic, etc. (for a monogram); suggestions for suitable type and ornament for a given publication; list of the marks found on Wedgwood pottery; comparison of the size of an average man today and in mediaeval times; suggestions of emblematic objects for letter-heads of firms, societies, lodges; opinion on alleged signature of Washington; present whereabouts of a stud made by Cellini; advice as to the probable market for a proposed volume of views of the Alaska-Yukon-Pacific Exposition; the publisher of a catalogue of an exhibition of old masters held elsewhere; a good likeness of Napoleon smiling.

W. E. H.

¹ By the ruling of the Trustees, the valuation of any object of art may not be given, and so these questions, which are very frequently asked, cannot be answered.